CAREER SERVICES STRATEGIC INITIATIVES PROGRAM

Formative Evaluation

Evaluation and Data Development
Strategic Policy
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and
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CD-ROM - Compact Disc — Read Only Memory
CEO - Chief Executive Officers
CS - Career Services
EWG - Evaluation Working Group
HRCC - Human Resources Career Centres
HRDC - Human Resources Development Canada
IT - Information Technology
K - Kindergarten
KCDC - Keewatin Career Development Corporation
LAN - Local Area Network
LFDA - Labour Force Development Agreement
LMI - Labour Market Information
MNS - Métis Nation of Saskatchewan
NCC - New Careers Corporation
PSEST - Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training
RC - Regional Colleges
REDAs - Rural Economic Development Associations
SAO - Senior Academic Officers
SI - Strategic Initiatives
SIAST - Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
SLFDB - Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board
WAN - Wide Area Network
W/S - Work/Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Canada and Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Agreement was signed in November 1994 as part of an effort to revitalise Canada's social security system by eliminating barriers to labour force participation. In January 1996, the Canada/ Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement was signed, outlining co-operative arrangements for the design, funding, implementation, and evaluation of three pilot areas or streams within the guidelines of the Strategic Initiatives Program. Career Services, Labour Market Information, and Work/Study were identified as priority areas to pilot innovative projects.

The CS program initiatives were designed to develop and test new approaches for providing career services information and delivery mechanisms to clients in order to increase the access to career and employment information. An underlying principle of the CS stream emphasised among partner agencies the need to improve the co-ordination of, and collaboration among, career services delivery systems. The specific target markets and clients of the program varied from project to project, but in general the CS pilots focused on assisting the general public, job seekers, employers, career counsellors, educational institutes, and others with career planning and decision making, as well as career service delivery.

The CS program is testing new and innovative ways to identify, collect, and disseminate career information and related delivery services. The CS SI pilot projects were designed to provide learning opportunities and to explore alternative practices regarding the collection of current, relevant career information, as well as to develop appropriate and effective delivery mechanisms relating to career services. A community-based approach (building partnerships) and the use of multi-media were identified as the two key components for CS pilot projects. For the purposes of the formative evaluation, the main focus of the CS initiative is on the process of establishing the pilot projects, as well as the development of partnerships and the associated products arising from those partnerships.

Provincial and federal co-chairs were appointed to oversee the development of the CS initiative. A Working Group with diverse stakeholders involved in career services from across Saskatchewan was formed to establish guidelines for selecting Career Service projects under the principles set out by the Strategic Initiatives Agreement. Three project areas were identified by the Working Group in order to explore development of partnership models. The emphasis was on building and sustaining strong community linkages in order to ensure that needs would be met at the grass-roots level.

The three pilot project areas were:

The Rural Project — Seven of the regional colleges within the province sponsor the Rural Project which is designed to provide rural communities with increased accessibility to career services information and counselling through the use of multi-media.

The Northern Project — The Keewatin Career Development Corporation representing Northern Métis Nation and First Nations organizations, training institutions, and community. The focus of the Northern Project is to develop a career assessment process to encourage northern residents to strive to increase their level of education and to access career opportunities. Access to a web site describing career services and related northern labour market information is another component of the project.

The Urban Project — The Urban Project is known as the Regina Career Linx and has three sponsors: Human Resources Centre Canada – Regina, New Careers Corporation, and SIAST Wascana Campus. The primary focus of the pilot project, together with its partnership approach, is meeting client needs through collaboration, co-ordination, and sharing of resources. The Career Linx project offers a centrally accessible location to provide clients with the resources or tools needed to assist them in career planning and placement by directing clients to appropriate agencies for career, training, employment, and related services.

A pre-operational phase for each project area was established as an important first step in designing and developing the CS program. This served to better define the parameters for pilot projects and provided an opportunity to conduct a formal needs assessment process. The needs assessment process helped to more clearly identify the primary target clients of the CS initiative and to provide the development of more detailed region-specific descriptions of those target markets.

Representatives from target markets and community-based organizations with an interest in career services participated in the needs assessment process, through community advisory committees formed for this purpose. The community advisory committees continue to provide feedback to the co-ordinators/facilitators of the CS pilot projects. After the projects were approved, direct management of them was devolved to the local project level, with the CS Working Group being informed of projects' progress through a variety of mechanisms.

Evaluation

Evaluation was identified as an important component of the Strategic Initiatives Agreement because the initiatives were testing new and innovative approaches to increasing labour force participation. Approaches identified for testing included: use

of partnerships, community and industry involvement, multi-media, and other means to reduce barriers. In October 1996, Calibre Consultants Inc. was contracted to conduct the evaluation under the direction of the federal and provincial co-chairs of the Strategic Initiatives Evaluation Working Group.

The evaluation has two phases: the "formative evaluation," which assesses the development phase and associated processes, and the "summative evaluation," which assesses the impacts of the program after product development and implementation. The formative evaluation was conducted between November 1996 and July 1997. Methodologies to conduct the evaluation included: an administrative file review, secondary research, 25 in-depth interviews with key informants and stakeholders, and 1 workshop with stakeholders. The stakeholder workshop was held to review and discuss research findings and to develop common understandings regarding issues, responses, and recommendations. As well, Calibre provided the EWG and Strategic Initiatives Co-chairs Group with iterations of the formative draft for comment and clarification prior to finalisation of the document in early 1998.

Career Services Formative Evaluation Findings

1. The CS pilot projects have the potential to be successful collaborative ventures. Interviews with key informants identified the partnerships, effective use of technology, and the involvement of both federal and provincial governments as the primary achievements during the formative stage. Soliciting grass-roots support from a wide range of stakeholders and involving most throughout the process for the CS pilot projects has been beneficial to the generally smooth operation of each of the pilots. This has also served to increase the relevance and support for the overall CS Strategic Initiative stream.

2. Developing partnerships is time consuming. Considerable time and effort has been expended to involve community stakeholders from diverse organizations involved in labour market development and career services delivery, many of whom previously operated independently. The CS Strategic Initiative has provided a structure for the sharing of information, joint service and program development, and increased collaboration beyond the pilot projects. Substantial opportunities exist to capitalise on the foundation that has been established through the CS Strategic Initiative and to realise continued benefits through sustained partnerships at the community level.

3. Technology can be beneficial in creating greater access to CS and Labour Market Information, but the less experienced the client group is with the use of technology, the more focussed the effort must be to ensure the technology is user friendly, accessible, well understood, and adequately supported.

4. Technical expertise for development may be limited in more remote client markets, and this should be factored into timelines for product development.

5. Administrative policies and procedures should be finalised before programs solicit proposals. There was considerable pressure to quickly design and implement the CS projects once the Canada/Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement was announced. As a result, for one project there was a delay between program design, project operations, and implementation. Strategic Initiatives administrative delays resulted in shortened timelines for project implementation and product testing and assessment.

6. A pre-operational or planning phase to develop a framework for each of the SI streams was essential to ensuring a smooth and timely transition to the operational or implementation phase for each of the pilot projects. This pre-operational (design) framework phase should include:

   - appropriate allocation of human and financial resources;
   - reasonable timelines for project design and delivery;
   - necessary training of program delivery and support staff;
   - identification of required reporting and tracking mechanisms;
   - collaboration with other Strategic Initiative programs, such as the Labour Market Information stream;
   - development of partnerships; and
   - the development of supporting policies and procedures.

   The consequences of not having a pre-operational phase were:

   - scarce resources for planning;
   - delays in the project applications;
   - limited partnership development; and
   - inadequate pilot project planning and development.

7. Local management of the pilot projects has allowed each pilot to address issues based on the needs of clients in each geographic area and to encourage local participation of community, business, and client/target market organizations. The CS pilot projects will provide direction to government regarding new models of career services delivery. However, the pilot projects also are impacted by governments' long-term vision for the provision of career services, particularly within the context of the *Saskatchewan Training Strategy: Bridges to Employment* and the withdrawal of the federal government from direct service delivery through the Labour Market Development Agreement process.

8. Labour Market Information and CS products are closely linked, with clients using the outputs of these two streams. Focus groups determined that clients sometimes do not distinguish between Labour Market Information and CS. The decision to separate the two streams has led to some difficulties in co-ordination. Close communication between Labour Market Information and CS has been managed through the Working Group, project officers, and Strategic Initiatives co-chairs. This has helped increase co-ordination between the two areas. Efforts to increase the common understanding of how the two streams interrelate must continue.

9. The CS projects provide opportunities for innovation, including using new technology for providing career services to people who previously did not have access to these services. The multi-media focus, linking of partners via current technology (using Wide Area Network or Internet) is viewed as an effective and innovative method for collecting and delivering career services to a wide audience spread over large geographic areas in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Technology is constantly changing – this presents both opportunities and challenges to the users and the providers of careers services program delivery. All CS projects are dependent upon continual maintenance and updating of technology. A plan to maintain the technology is essential to ensure the ongoing usefulness of the investment that has been made, both by the Strategic Initiatives Program and by the many community partners.

10. Development and implementation of a computerised Strategic Initiatives Database/Tracking System have been ineffective and problematic. Future programs must ensure a working, "bug-free" tracking capacity with clearly identified data needs/inputs is up and running at the start of a program. Input/data needs should be finalised before soliciting proposals. Consideration of maintenance, including data entry, must also be part of the overall planning process prior to program implementation.

11. External communication, including press releases, letters to potential sponsor organizations, newspaper advertising, presentations by staff, and word-of-mouth promotion, was effective in creating awareness and generating applications to the CS Strategic Initiative. Newsletters are an effective means of keeping partners and client groups of partners informed of pilot project activities. Given electronic line-ups, bulletin boards might be considered for future projects.

12. Sponsorship of a community-based partnership operating model by two orders of government, each with its own operating parameters and administration requirements, requires additional planning time and capacity.

13. Partnership development, so critical to long-term sustainability of community-based initiatives, takes a great deal of time, energy, and commitment of resources.

14. Partnerships are successful when based upon a shared vision, specific objectives, and goals which provide benefits to all, with the partnership being formed at the planning phase of any program or pilot.

15. Continuous communication and information sharing about progress, issues, and solutions must be adequately resourced and built into the process.

16. The decision, taken at the outset of the Strategic Initiatives projects, to limit allocations for administrative resources in favour of maximising those available for programming has had a negative impact on the timelines for project implementation.

17. An appropriate level of human and financial resources for administration is required to increase timeliness and effectiveness and to ensure that client expectations for high-quality service can be achieved.

18. New programs require administrative resources for the development of policies, procedures, processes, and systems. Continued internal monitoring and flexibility in allocating administrative resources according to requirements is needed.

19. The development of new, unique, and widespread partnerships in all three Career Service pilot projects is viewed as an achievement of the CS Strategic Initiative stream. Federal and provincial governments, as well as many diverse community-based organizations, are working together, using joint decision making, planning, communication, and overall involvement in development and implementation of the CS Strategic Initiative. Excellent leadership and communication provided by the co-chairs and the Career Service project co-ordinator has led to a focus on common goals and the ability to compromise to meet those goals.

20. The decision to target remote and/or rural areas for CS pilot project development is positive because the pilots provide a stimulus which may be beneficial over the long term in reducing labour force participation barriers in areas with higher than average provincial unemployment rates or lower participation rates.

21. The resources allocated for the CS administration were kept at a minimum in order to maximise the amount of funding available to pilot projects. Each of the three CS pilots had a budget of $1,000,000 to allocate over two years to their pre-operational and operational phases. The flexibility given to consortia responsible to formulate the pilots and deliver them has been well received. It

allowed them to determine funding allocations within the set budget amount over the period of the pilot. This, in turn, meant project managers who are field based could allocate funds as needs arose, thus maximising the effectiveness of the pilot projects.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were identified as priorities for the CS Strategic Initiative stream.

1. Identify good practices arising from pilot projects that may be applicable to an integrated career and employment services system in the province.

2. Continue to monitor requirements for administrative resources and allocate funding as required for efficient and effective service.

3. Ensure the Strategic Initiatives Database/Tracking System is functioning properly and meeting its mandate to provide activity reports for timely decision making. Provide appropriate staff training to increase and ensure the effectiveness of the Database/Tracking System.

Recommendations: Future Career Services Programs

1. Incorporate a pre-operational (planning and design) phase with timelines and appropriate allocation of resources (including human resources) in complex programs like CS for the following activities:

   - partnership development;
   - focus groups with stakeholders to provide input in program design;
   - development of common visions and objectives;
   - development of detailed but flexible policies, procedures, processes, and job descriptions;
   - identification and implementation of tracking system and monitoring requirements;
   - development of an appropriate communication strategy; and
   - development and implementation of an appropriate training program for staff.

2. Provide additional planning time and capacity when using community-based partnership operating models for program development and delivery.

3. Use program criteria that are transparent and establish a framework within which applicants can determine useful as well as definable outcomes.

4. Develop clear and concise written material outlining the program vision, objectives, criteria, roles, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and expected timelines.

5. Allocate appropriate timeframes and resources, since significant time and resources (human and financial) are required to establish true partnerships and to develop relationships at the community level and among federal/provincial government departments and agencies, industry, and community-based organizations.

6. Ensure grass-roots involvement and community-based support from a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process.

7. Encourage local management of the pilot projects to address issues of concern based on the needs of clients in each geographical area and to encourage local participation of community, business, and client/target market organizations.

8. Ensure technology is user-friendly, accessible, well understood, and adequately supported.

9. Expectations related to government communications policies and requirements and their systems of operation must be established with community partners and project staff at the beginning of any program like CS Strategic Initiative.

10. Provide presentations and written material regarding new programs to staff at the community service level, even if they are not directly involved in administering programs.

11. Involve funding and training partners in the developmental stage of individual projects to improve co-ordination of activities.

12. Allocate appropriate administrative resources to meet client expectations for timely and high-quality information. Timelines for joint federal and provincial programs must incorporate the time required for approval by both orders of government.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

CS is one of three initiatives undertaken with Canada-Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives. The findings and recommendations of the CS formative evaluation have been carefully reviewed and the findings accepted. The evaluation results have been used to modify ongoing programs and have been shared with individuals involved in CS. The findings will be used in the continuous improvement of services to clients.

Wayne McElree
Provincial Co-chair
November 5, 1998

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Federal Co-chair
November 5, 1998

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In November, 1994, Canada and Saskatchewan signed a Labour Force Development Agreement designed to provide a framework for joint planning, management, service, program delivery, and evaluation of labour force development services in the province. The agreement grew out of an interest by both orders of government in taking a joint approach to trying new ways of improving the effectiveness of efforts to develop a skilled labour force and increase access to training and jobs in Saskatchewan. Consultation had identified issues that focus on the need for:

- better co-ordination of planning and service delivery across the two orders of government;
- more community involvement in the development of programs and services;
- more involvement of employers and various industry sectors in identifying training priorities and providing training opportunities; and
- better access among people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, women, members of visible minorities, people on social assistance, and youth to training and jobs.

Within the LFDA, Strategic Initiatives were identified as a high priority for joint development. In January 1996, Canada and Saskatchewan signed a Canada/Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement outlining co-operative arrangements for the design, funding, implementation, and evaluation of three pilot initiatives within the guidelines of the Federal Government's Strategic Initiatives Program: Labour Market Information, Career Services, and Work/Study. The specific program initiatives outlined in the agreement are intended to provide a continuum of integrated programs and services that support the transition to work and to build effective co-operation between communities, industry, training institutions, and governments to meet provincial labour force development needs. The Strategic Initiatives Program is part of the Government of Canada's social security reform project, designed to eliminate disincentives to work and to encourage labour force participation.[1]

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[1] A Framework for the Evaluation of the Joint Planning Arrangements, Co-Location Projects and Strategic Initiatives Under the Canada-Saskatchewan Agreement on Labour Force Development and the Canada-Saskatchewan Contribution Agreement Concerning Labour Market Initiatives under the Strategic Initiatives Program. March, 1996.

1.2 CAREER SERVICES PROGRAM

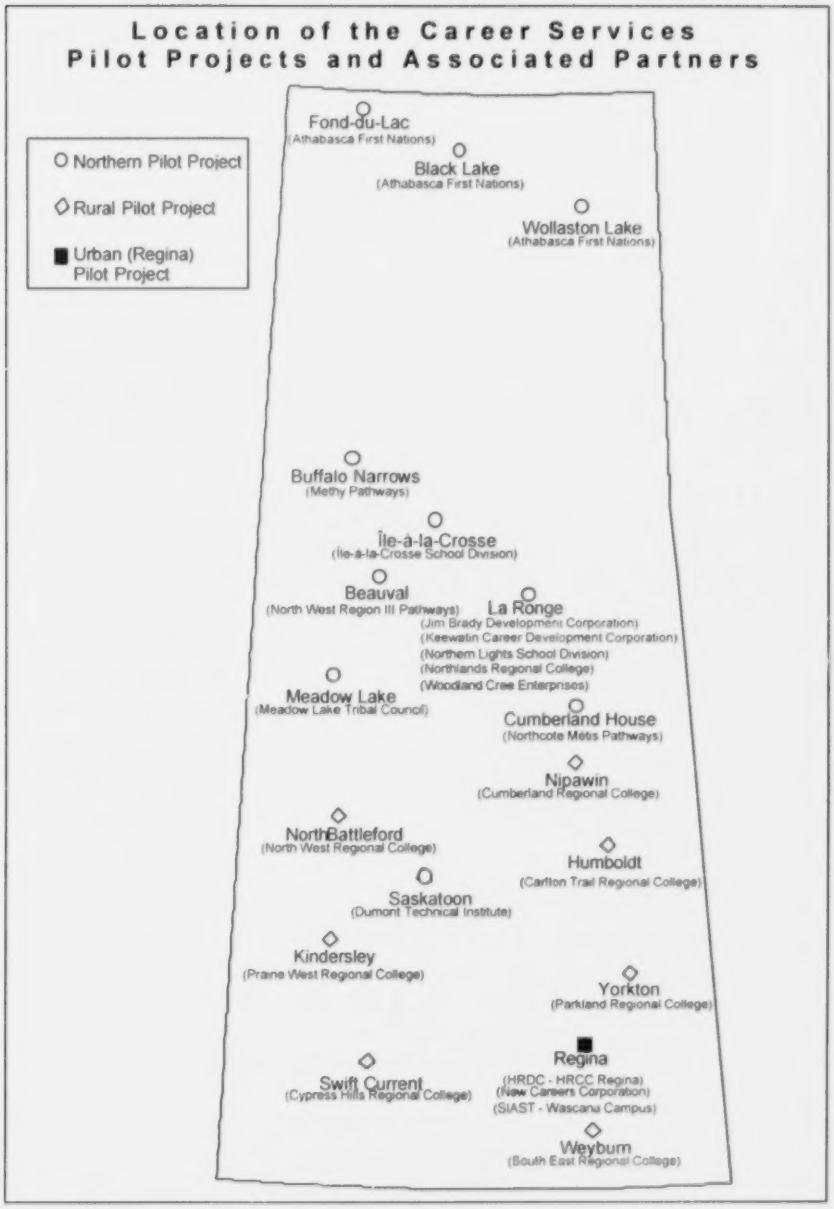
Using a community-based approach of participation and involvement, the CS program aims to develop and test multi-media programs, products, and strategies that will assist clients, job seekers, employers, career counsellors, educational institutions, and others with the process of career planning and decision making. Three pilot projects were chosen to test CS initiatives in rural, urban, and northern Saskatchewan to respond to the needs of clients in those areas. The projects were awarded based upon a set of guidelines within the Careers Services stream, and each project was set up and operated based on individual contracts each with its own set of work activities and goals. Each project underwent a pre-operational phase, under the direction of the review committee, and this phase determined the direction of the projects. A map of the province, highlighting the location of each of the pilots and its partner organizations (in brackets) can be found on page 3.

1.3 CAREER SERVICES PILOT PROJECTS

1.3.1 CAREER SERVICES RURAL PROJECT

Linking seven of the regional colleges within the province, the Rural Project is designed to test the provision of increased access to career services information and counselling to rural communities through the use of multi-media. A multi-media resource centre, including all of the necessary equipment, resources, and support services, will be established and tested in each of the seven regional colleges. These resource centres will assist people in meeting their career-planning objectives. The multi-media centre will allow users to access career services information from any location with the use of a computer.

The Rural Project will create linkages between occupational information, training opportunities, job opportunities, and labour market information by means of Internet and Wide Area Network. Regional college data, including course information and graduate information, will also be presented on the electronic network with linkages to other training programs and occupational, employment, and labour market information. Other electronic services available to the community will include links to local, regional, and global information services.


Location of the Career Services
Pilot Projects and Associated Partners
Northern Pilot Project
Rural Pilot Project
Urban (Regina) Pilot Project
Fond-du-Lac
(Athabasca First Nations)
Black Lake
(Athabasca First Nations)
Wollaston Lake
(Athabasca First Nations)
Buffalo Narrows
(Methy Pathways)
Île-à-la-Crosse
(Île-à-la-Crosse School Division)
Beauval
(North West Region III Pathways)
La Ronge
(Jim Brady Development Corporation)
(Keewatin Career Development Corporation)
(Northern Lights School Division)
(Northlands Regional College)
(Woodland Cree Enterprises)
Meadow Lake
(Meadow Lake Tribal Council)
Cumberland House
(Northcote Métis Pathways)
Nipawin
(Cumberland Regional College)
NorthBattleford
(North West Regional College)
Humboldt
(Carlton Trail Regional College)
Saskatoon
(Dumont Technical Institute)
Kindersley
(Prairie West Regional College)
Yorkton
(Parkland Regional College)
Regina
(HRDC - HRCC Regina)
(New Careers Corporation)
(SIAST - Wascana Campus)
Swift Current
(Cypress Hills Regional College)
Weyburn
(South East Regional College)

Other potential services being piloted include:

- a possible joint web site (partnering with other CS deliverers and Strategic Initiatives LMI projects);
- an up-to-date career resource directory developed and maintained in different formats (i.e., on the WAN and in print); and
- a needs assessment of business and industry's needs for career services. This will form the basis for the development of strategies to help individuals move from training into the workforce.

The centres are being supported by technical support staff who provide training on the use of the career resource centre and on communicating with other sites. Career counsellors at each of the pilot sites will be trained in the use of technology and multi-media products. The centres will share resources and information.

An on-line counsellor will be available to assist users if needed, although the software will be designed for novice users. On-line tutorials will assist in employment searches, career assessments, and resumé writing.

The centres are open to the public, and a marketing strategy has been developed to promote the centres and their services. A strategy will also be developed to increase accessibility to the career resource centres outside regular office hours.

13.2 Career Services Northern Project

The Northern Project is sponsored by the Keewatin Career Development Corporation, which was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in March 1996. KCDC represents a partnership of the following:

- Athabasca First Nations (Black Lake, Fond-du-Lac, and Hatchet Lake);
- Dumont Technical Institute;
- Île-à-la-Crosse School Division;
- Jim Brady Development Corporation;
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council;
- Methy Pathways;
- Northcote Métis Pathways;
- Northern Lights School Division;

- Northlands Regional College;
- North West Region III Métis Pathways; and
- Woodland Cree Enterprises.

The Northern Project has developed a career assessment process to encourage northern residents to strive to increase their level of education and to access career opportunities. The process includes methodologies by which counsellors can assist northern workforce members in dealing with social and health problems that may affect them. The process takes into account cultural differences which are significant to most northern residents.

Over 40 locations in 24 northern communities have been identified where a guidance counsellor, outreach worker, or other similar resource person will be used in the pilot project. These individuals will be trained and updated on multi-media career services information and will disseminate this information to northern students and residents as part of routine work in their communities. CS providers will be able to access labour market or career services information more quickly via computer, rather than relying solely on printed materials.

Access to a web site describing career services and related information is another component of the project. The web site will include an employment matching system, links to other relevant sites, and a virtual career symposium. Secured information on the web site regarding specific northern employment and training opportunities and economic development initiatives will be developed by KCDC. The pilot sites will be linked together electronically through Internet and Intranet technology.

Northern labour market information will be developed to encourage northerners to access occupation-related information. Descriptions of occupations and the educational routes necessary to access the occupations will be included in the information presented on the web site.

A public awareness campaign using electronic, print, radio, and video media will be conducted to raise awareness of the services offered under the project, as well as to encourage northerners to pursue various career options, including those which are non-traditional to the northern workforce. Indications are that it will likely be helpful in increasing awareness and interest in career opportunities.

13.3 CAREER SERVICES URBAN — REGINA CAREER LINX PROJECT

Three agencies that provide complementary career services in Regina are the sponsors of the Regina Career Linx Project: HRCC-Regina, SIAST Wascana Campus, and New Careers Corporation. The primary focus of the partnership is meeting client needs through mutual collaboration, co-ordination, and sharing of resources. The Regina Career Linx project offers a centrally accessible location to provide clients with the resources or tools needed to assist them in career planning and placement by directing clients to appropriate agencies for career training, employment, and related services.

The following three core areas have been identified for product development for the project's electronic network:

- career pathing (helping employment seekers make career decisions);
- employment pathing (helping employers make employment-related decisions); and
- work matching (strengthening the link between employment search and employment acquisition through labour market information and linking employment opportunities to employment seekers).

The Regina Career Linx web site will provide links to other relevant sites. Web site products are focusing on content that is:

- locally based and developed;
- emphasising human contact;
- interactive through the provision of chat lines and e-mail addresses; and
- helpful by listing the telephone numbers of experts for advice on using the system and interpreting information.

Access to on-line information regarding course descriptions for SIAST Wascana Campus and possibly an on-line application process will be incorporated. More sophisticated multi-media software that supports two-way conversation mimicking will also be considered. All multi-media products will be developed in such a way as to ensure content, including the language used, is as user-friendly as possible for the diverse client groups within the community.

A Testing and Training Centre developed as an aspect of the Regina Career Linx pilot provides an opportunity to bring together various stakeholders to identify problems and develop mutually supportive solutions. It will act as a community

capacity builder around multi-media career and employment resources. The centre will be used to review existing career services multi-media products, develop new products, and provide support services to ensure users are able to access information. Training on the use of the centre will be provided to referred clients and career counsellors from the partners and community-based organizations in train-the-trainer sessions. Counsellors will be able to access multi-media products and services along with training support.

The Testing and Training Centre is expected to evolve into a co-ordinated Multi-Media Resource Centre, where all three partners will work together to deliver career services. This centre will encompass the continued development of the community network, testing of the electronic network, and establishment of a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of resources by the three partners.

Participation by other potential community partners, such as the public library system, will be solicited for delivering and supporting multi-media career services and labour market information in order to expand the accessibility of the products and services. The Testing and Training Centre and the Multi-Media Resource Centre will provide new access to technology for the partners and the community.

2.0 FINDINGS AND KEY LEARNINGS

The formative evaluation findings are organised into the four broad evaluation categories: Relevance, Project Design and Delivery, Project Success, and Project Cost Effectiveness. Evidence to support the evaluation findings is drawn on from all three CS pilot projects and from the overall management of the CS stream. The evaluation findings reflect the state of the projects as of July 1997.

2.1 RELEVANCE

1. What was the process used to determine the social and economic need for the CS program?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Involvement of a large number of career services stakeholders in program and project design has increased the relevance of, and support for, the CS SI.**
- **The process used to determine the social and economic need for the CS program has benefited from involvement of industry and community-based organizations. Greater involvement of additional federal and provincial government departments/agencies with an interest in career services development would have strengthened the partnerships and helped to more fully integrate programs with other social and economic development programs at the community level.**
- **It is beneficial to use focus groups and hold workshops.**
- **Ensure the capacity to offset the costs for travel, per diems, and accommodation exists for participants from non-government organizations, if such costs are limiting participation.**

One of the Strategic Initiatives principles is to link programs and services to local and provincial social and economic needs. The CS program was designed with the recognition that innovative career services information and delivery approaches are necessary to meet challenging and varying social and economic development goals. The decision to operate three pilots – Rural, Northern, and Urban — reflects this recognition in that these three broad geographic and social elements reflect Saskatchewan realities. Between 60 and 65 percent of Saskatchewan's 1 million

people live in rural areas. The largest urban centre in the province, Saskatoon, has just over 200,000 people, and Saskatchewan's north, which occupies approximately half the land mass of the province is populated predominantly by Aboriginal people who live in widely dispersed, small communities.

All three CS projects engaged in an extensive needs assessment process that included telephone surveys and focus groups. Each project carried out a variety of other tasks to help determine the specific needs of its clients.

A good illustration of the type of needs assessment done is the Rural Project. The Rural Project used telephone surveys, five focus groups, practitioner surveys, career services inventories, and a number of document reviews as methodologies and tasks to complete its needs assessment. Officials working with the rural project conducted a random survey of 303 people in communities with populations of less than 10,000. The survey was designed to gather information about demographics, career services used in the last five years, the level of satisfaction with career services used, information about future demand for career services, and opinions about options for future delivery of career services.

The Rural Project conducted five focus groups with representatives from the following:

- equity groups, including people with disabilities, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, and women;
- regional colleges;
- HRDC;
- New Careers Corporation;
- Social Services;
- school divisions;
- home and school associations and parents;
- health districts;
- economic development organizations and regional economic development authorities;
- business and industry; and
- high schools.

The project also surveyed 59 practitioners in the field of career counselling. A comprehensive career services inventory in each of the seven regional college areas was completed.

Information from the research was included in *The Needs Assessment Report*. This information was reviewed by the project facilitators (one per college) and used as the basis for developing an implementation plan. The seven regional Community Consultation Groups, representing stakeholders from each region, were also active in the review and endorsement of the needs assessment report and implementation plan.

The other two projects conducted similar needs assessments to determine what gaps existed and how best to target their resources.

2. How have the labour force development needs of target groups been incorporated in the design of the CS program?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **It is important to involve representatives of target groups in the program design phase (in particular, the needs assessment process) to address their needs.**
- **Organizations were motivated to become involved in partnerships in order to better meet the needs of their clients groups.**
- **The CS projects will continue to incorporate community involvement in all aspects of the SI Program.**

The main way in which the labour force development needs of target groups have been addressed in all three of the CS projects, was through the establishment of the partnerships and the extensive needs assessment process which was undertaken. The grass-roots-level feedback associated with the needs assessment process helped identify the career services needs of the various client and target groups. This information served to focus the design of multi-media products and identify the most realistic ways to deliver career services to client and target groups.

Each project has been designed to meet the needs of people in its region, based on the needs assessment completed. Community representatives have been involved in the development process of each project. Key informant interviews indicated that in some cases it has been difficult to engage representatives from stakeholder groups, as the groups do not perceive that their participation will provide direct benefits. Also, groups representing clients have limited capacity and must be selective about how they use it, given the wide array of social, economic,

educational, and health-related agencies and departments which request their input. The CS projects will continue to incorporate community consultation during the development and delivery phase and will seek opportunities to further involve target group representatives as part of the consultation process. The impact evaluation will also assist in assessing the effectiveness of the pilots (particularly their use of multi-media products) in delivering career services to equity groups recognised under the SI Program.

2. How was innovation instrumental to the CS program?

Key Learnings

- **Stakeholders recognise the importance of encouraging innovative career services delivery mechanisms to better meet labour market needs, particularly in an environment of change.**
- **Flexibility is required to identify creative solutions and improved training and skills development approaches for the future.**
- **'Innovation' has the potential to identify and provide new approaches to better meet labour force development requirements. Innovative programs have the potential to provide models for career services accessibility and delivery on a broader scale.**
- **The development of new multi-media technologies to simplify, improve, and co-ordinate the delivery of career services information is seen as positive.**

In-depth interviews and workshops have identified the following aspects of the CS pilot projects to be innovative:

- Community-based approach (partnerships) — for example, establishment of an organisation in the North helps portray the joint ownership between the First Nations and Métis Nation groups; and the partnership among seven of the rural regional colleges represents the first time they have shared responsibility for a system development project.
- Use of technology to provide and improve access to career services information and products and to link partners through the new technologies developed.
- Collaboration on new processes and products among the various levels of government, communities, and stakeholders.

The community-based approach to project design and implementation was conceived to increase the accessibility and relevance of the programs and services offered. As an example of these innovations, the CS Northern Project developed a culturally sensitive delivery model for career services and worked towards building an electronic communication network for career service providers and agencies. This network increased the level of communication and interaction among career services providers, employers, and job seekers with respect to career services information, employment, and training opportunities in northern Saskatchewan. The culturally sensitive delivery model has helped gain wide-based support and increased use of the services available through KCDC.

4. How does the CS program represent improvements in service to clients over existing programs?

Key Learnings

- **More accessible and comprehensive information and delivery methods to meet the needs of employers and employees are expected to be beneficial to individuals, organisations, and communities.**

- **Strong links among employers, practitioners, community-based organisations, and education and training institutions are expected to result in a reduction in the duplication of services and improved access to the information provided.**

- **Traditional education and training institutes and governments are recognised as increasing their responsiveness to client, employer, and community needs.**

- **The CS program allows providers of career services information to develop delivery models based on a set of 'best practices,' which can be used as a foundation on which to design and deliver future projects.**

All three CS projects have a similar objective: to provide more accessible and comprehensive career and labour market information to their respective clients. It is anticipated that co-operation among the partners and the use of multi-media technology will result in equitable, affordable, and flexible access for clients to a full range of career services information and resources.

The use of multi-media technology is expected to result in an improvement in the level and quality of service presently available and to lead to increased client access to services that will assist clients in making career decisions.

Computer access to labour market information, such as regional employment and occupational information, as well as electronic job matching, will allow the CS projects to provide specific information on employment or training opportunities to individual clients, educational institutes, career counsellors, and others. Computer access to career pathing tools will assist in the development of career plans. Also, it is anticipated that computer-based access will facilitate more timely and current career and labour market information.

The Regina Career Linx needs assessment indicated that prior to SI, there was minimal co-ordination among providers. Consequently, clients needed to visit a number of locations to acquire career services information. Opportunities identified to improve service delivery included:

- identifying and using the best practices in what was currently offered in career services delivery;
- co-operating in the design and delivery of programs and services which would provide the most benefit to clients;
- consolidating partners' existing resources; and
- developing a model of career services delivery which represents a continuum of support to job seekers and employers of career service delivery.

The Career Linx project improves service through a centrally accessible location that provides clients with resources or tools they need immediately or directs them to appropriate agencies for career, training, employment, and related services. This project offers opportunities for better career services delivery to customers through the agency staff and community members' increased understanding of the programs and services that are offered by the three partners and other organisations in Regina. Clients can access all relevant information from one location during one visit. Information available from the central location is also accessible from a distance, via computer, thereby further increasing accessibility for individuals from other areas of the province who may be considering moving to Regina or another, larger centre to look for employment, continue their training, and so on.

A value-added feature of the project for clients and agency staff has been the focus on recruiting organisations that represent employers and involving them in the process of designing the Regina Career Linx Project. In the past, career services delivery has been directed largely at work seekers, with little involvement of employers. Key informant interviews indicated that the involvement of employers in the project is seen as a significant improvement in the delivery of career services in Regina.

2.2 PROJECT DESIGN AND DELIVERY

1. Have any operational/legislative/regulatory/jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of the CS program to achieve its objectives? How were these handled?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **The design and development of complex programs which target community-based partnership approaches must include sufficient time, funding, and human resource allocations (research and development allocations for program design and delivery) at the outset to accommodate the process.**
- **The amount of time and level of required human resources involved in developing and implementing the program were not fully appreciated in the initial stages. As a result, there have been delays in each of the pilot projects. This is having an impact on the capacity to develop actual products for testing in the timeframe of the Strategic Initiatives Agreement.**
- **When designing multi-year projects and programs, governments should:**
  1. **consider rolling funding appropriate to match operations over the life of the project or program;**
  2. **ensure that fiscal year allocations for projects and programs are not lost if they are not completely used in that particular year; and**
  3. **ensure sufficient funding and human resources are available to accommodate operational requirements for the duration of the project or program.**

Sponsoring organizations were given direction to develop and implement projects. The ability to do this effectively and efficiently has sometimes been hampered by government administrative requirements that arose in the early stages of SI and by uncertainties in the areas of technology infrastructure, official language requirements, and communication guidelines. CS staff had to come together quickly and get the projects to an operational level in a short period of time. The lack of common understanding surrounding administrative policies, procedures, and processes contributed to inefficiencies.

In the North, cultural difference is a major factor. Program evaluation must take into account the enormous geographic territory that is covered, the inconsistent technological infrastructure which existed at the outset of the SI Program, the expense of travel and co-ordination of personnel, and the lack of readily available technical expertise.

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational structure of CS?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Stakeholder involvement in program design and planning helped to increase support and commitment to the program. It is important that stakeholders involved have a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. The use of focus groups may have been a more effective way of gaining input for program design.**
- **The CS program criteria have provided opportunities for unique and innovative projects to be tested and to serve as models for similar initiatives in the future. The program was designed for flexibility to allow for new learning opportunities. Inclusion of a pre-operational phase for further refinement of each project prior to implementation was instrumental in determining the direction of each project and in building partnerships.**
- **Broad representation on the CS Working Group set the tone for the community-based partnership approach that served as the foundation for each project. Community-based organizations have committed a great deal of time and effort, as well as direction, to all three CS projects. There has been no remuneration or off-setting compensation for them. Their volunteered expertise is evidence of the strong commitment to the concept of more integrated community-based career services.**
- **Ongoing communication with stakeholders and partners helps to increase understanding and support for programs. Newsletters are beneficial in keeping stakeholders and partners informed about progress and upcoming events.**

The organizational structure of the CS program was itself innovative in that it involved various and numerous partners in all aspects of program design, development, and implementation. Partner organizations, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and staff from many government agencies were involved and interested in designing, testing, and delivering projects for the CS pilots to best meet the needs of their clients. Specifics of each project's organizational structure can be found in Appendix Two.

As part of the Canada and Saskatchewan Strategic Initiatives Agreement, provincial and federal co-chairs were assigned to oversee the development of the CS Stream. A CS Working Group, including federal and provincial government officials, as well as stakeholders representing diverse groups, was formed to establish guidelines for selecting CS projects under the principles set out by the Strategic Initiatives Program.

Each CS project's organizational structure has been designed to best meet the needs of the project. The Rural Project has two half-time co-ordinators and seven regional project facilitators, one at each of the participating regional colleges. The Northern Project and the Regina Career Linx Project each have a project manager to co-ordinate project activities. Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training has provided the overall co-ordination, administration, and monitoring for the CS projects through a full-time program co-ordinator. Because the program was new to the province, many of the administrative policies and procedures have been developed as the CS projects progressed. While flexibility has been beneficial in many ways, it has also resulted in some uncertainties in the process.

One of the weaknesses identified through the focus groups was that sometimes clients do not distinguish between Labour Market Information and CS. The decision to separate the two streams has led to unanticipated difficulties in co-ordination, partly as a result of the different approach each has taken with respect to needs assessments and organizational structure. However, the working groups, partners, and SI staff recognise the importance of co-ordination and communication between the LMI and CS streams and projects, particularly as the initiatives proceed to the next phase of developing products for end-users. Close communication between LMI and CS has been taking place at the co-ordinators' level, with many initiatives to increase co-ordination between the two areas. Increased interaction at other levels will also be beneficial to develop common understandings of how the projects in the two areas complement each other and to identify additional opportunities for synergies. Efforts to increase the common understanding of how the two streams interrelate will continue.

Some LMI products are in the development stage, and a process is being established to ensure LMI information and products are shared as they become available. The development of LMI products also has the potential to benefit from the needs assessments that have been conducted by each CS pilot project. Recently, LMI and CS formally agreed to work together on projects such as the Job Futures product. This will contribute to co-ordinated and integrated product development. The co-ordination and integration of the two SI streams can be depicted as another strength of the program.

Each CS project's organizational structure was designed to best meet the needs of that project. The CS project co-ordinator worked towards smooth co-ordination and communication with the co-chairs, individual project managers, project facilitators, and others. Stakeholders indicated that the work and effort of the CS project co-ordinator has helped to make all three CS projects more effective and efficient.

Rural Project

The current organizational structure of the CS Rural pilot (as depicted in Appendix Two) was not the original construct of the committee structure. Originally, the technical and standards committees reported to the Management Group. This arrangement did not work effectively, mainly as a result of the day-to-day requirements of the project facilitator and technical co-ordinator. The lag in getting feedback or guidance from these committees to the project facilitator and technical co-ordinator left too many gaps in the implementation phase. The delays resulted from the project facilitator and technical co-ordinator meeting with the Management Group only on a monthly basis. In order to facilitate a more effective implementation of the project, the reporting/organizational structure was revamped to its current design. The information resulting from the in-depth interviews strongly suggests the ability to refine or modify the organizational structure was an enormous benefit to the CS Rural Project.

The large geographical area covered by the CS Rural Project has required establishment of a regional facilitator and community consulting group in each of the participating regional colleges. The grass-roots information and participation of the community consulting groups has addressed, at least in part, the issue of the large geographical area covered by this project. This was accomplished by centrally co-ordinating the overall management of the project and rotating the meeting location of the Management Group (including the project facilitator and technical co-ordinator). The CS Rural and Northern pilot projects have also both faced geographical constraints, which required innovative organizational structures to aid in the design and implementation of the pilot projects.

A strength of the organizational structure of the CS program is the involvement and commitment at all levels of the many partner organizations. The CS committee members have shown strong support for the program and have contributed positively to ensure the success of each of the pilot projects.

3. How was the community informed about the CS program? Was the external communication effective?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Timelines for new programs must incorporate:**
  - **time to develop a communication strategy, including articulated roles and responsibilities of all partners, recognition policies, and translation requirements, so that the strategy is in place when needed; and**
  - **sufficient time to receive and process project funding approvals by both orders of government.**
- **Communication should be directed to the public only after the appropriate resources are in place to respond to inquiries.**
- **Communication about new programs to community-level service staff is important to assist staff members in responding to inquiries, even if the staff are not directly involved in administering programs. Personal presentations are an effective method of providing information to staff while strengthening commitment among partners at all levels.**

As the pilot projects began to operate, external communication was seen as a priority to inform potential users about the new career services available. Most of the external communication regarding the CS projects was informal during the pre-operational and developmental stages. A newsletter, *Career Services Update*, was distributed to key stakeholders to keep them informed on the progress of the pilot projects. Each project also developed its own communication linkages with local stakeholders. As the projects move into the operational phase, a more formal communication strategy will be necessary to maximise awareness of the CS pilots among individual clients, stakeholder institutions, and other potential users of the services. A full-time Strategic Initiatives information officer was contracted to assist the projects to develop and implement a co-ordinated SI communication strategy.

The communications adhered to policies developed jointly by the federal and provincial communications departments to reflect a shared commitment and a common message. The project officers worked with project partners to ensure their external communication also adhered to the communication policies. At the CS project level, some misunderstandings regarding government communication guidelines occurred because the guidelines, such as requirements to recognise government partners, were not clearly communicated in some areas. Project communication that was believed to be appropriate was later identified as not being compliant with guidelines. Partner organizations also provided information on the new career services to their constituents. Government policy and protocol dictates that press releases delivered by both orders of government must first be approved by both governments before the documents go to the public. These requirements are cumbersome and time consuming.

External communication about the CS program was very effective overall in creating awareness. More detailed analysis of external communications will be identified in the summative evaluation. In the summative evaluation, client and target market groups will be able to respond to on-line surveys and provide feedback on issues not covered in the formative evaluation.

Northern Project

As an example of how the community was informed about the CS program, communication about the Northern Project to northern residents has been conducted through the outreach counsellors in Pathway offices. These individuals traditionally provide CS information in the North. As well, a public relations awareness campaign was developed using various media formats and communications opportunities available in the region. Posters, pamphlets, broadcasting, CD-ROM, and an Internet home page will be used to create an awareness of, and an interest in, the career services available. The effectiveness of external communication will be examined during the summative evaluation.

4. What measures are being taken to monitor and assess the CS program?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **A database/tracking system is required at the outset of program initiation in order to capture pertinent data and information which will generate reports to contribute to informed and timely decision making.**
- **The CS program monitoring procedures are flexible and empower project officers to monitor financial documents as required.**
- **Ongoing monitoring capacity is needed with accountability at the most direct level of delivery possible (project officer or field level).**
- **Appropriate staff training is required to increase the tracking system's effectiveness.**

Measures are in place to monitor CS activities, finances, and impacts. The CS SI project co-ordinator was responsible to review and, in conjunction with the co-chairs and the SI Management Group, approve CS contracts. The CS project co-ordinator uses the contracts as a basis for monitoring the performance of each project, with respect to both tracking financial expenditures and determining whether the direction of the project is complying with contract requirements.

CS co-chairs meet regularly with the CS project co-ordinator regarding progress and challenges, and major decisions that have been made are provided to the SI Management Group.

Every CS project has a workplan with milestones and estimated expenditures. Project officers in each of the three pilots are responsible to verify program progress and identify completion of milestones through the following procedures:

- review of sponsors' monthly/quarterly reports;
- regular informal telephone contact with projects;
- site visits; and
- rigorous financial procedures.

Planning and preparation has been incorporated in the development of the Strategic Initiatives Database/Tracking System. This effort is expected to increase the overall monitoring and evaluation effectiveness through the collection and input of consistent information for reporting purposes. Delays were experienced, however, in getting the Database/Tracking System up and running and in implementing it for activity reports. The system is expected to provide the province with an infrastructure to administer and track future programs.

Some sponsors perceive the paperwork as cumbersome. Ongoing work is under way to refine progress reports and monitoring and financial forms in order to streamline the process and increase monitoring consistency.

Financial tracking has been effective. Spreadsheets track allocations for approved projects, contracted projects, and payments made. Financial reports are generated on a regular basis for management review and decision making.

Regina Career Linx Project

The Career Linx workplan establishes the mandate with five specific goals for the project. Objectives have been identified for each of the five goals, and measures of success have been defined for the mandate and each of the goals. These measures of success will be tracked to ascertain the project's level of success in meeting its objectives. On-line surveys and focus groups with clients are planned to help measure the project's effectiveness in the delivery phase (summative evaluation).

2.3 PROJECT SUCCESS

1. What types of partnerships have been developed through the CS program? What successes have the partnerships experienced? What challenges have the partnerships experienced and how have the challenges been handled?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Sponsorship of a community-based partnership operating model by two orders of government, each with its own operating parameters and administrative requirements, requires additional planning time and capacity.**
- **Partnership development, so critical to long-term sustainability of community-based initiatives, takes a great deal of time, energy, and commitment of resources.**
- **Partnerships are successful when based upon a shared vision, specific objectives, and goals which provide benefits to all, with the partnership being formed at the planning phase of any program or pilot.**
- **Continuous communication and information sharing about progress, issues, and solutions must be adequately resourced and built into the process.**

The CS pilot projects have been able to achieve significant benefits associated with creating partnerships. Even though the partners represent the needs of various segments of society, they have been able to reach a consensus on deliverable client services. The active participation of a number of agencies or organizations in providing career and labour market services creates more opportunities to form partnerships to deliver services and to define changing needs. Sustaining this will require continued co-operation to overcome challenges. The challenge involved in addressing many different needs through a common service delivery model can continue to be addressed by identifying manageable elements of the issues, working to build consensus around how to approach the element chosen, and celebrating successes along the way. This process is "people intensive" and must be adequately resourced.

The CS program has encouraged partnerships through its Working Group and the involvement of grass-roots community-based organizations in program design and at the individual project level. Partnership achievements include the following:

- informal networking and information sharing are in place among Working Group members;
- some of the linkages between comrnunity-based organizations, educational and training institutions, industry, and federal and provincial government officials that

existed before the CS program have been strengthened by the CS initiative and may become more permanent. Linkages between the LMI program and CS have also been created and/or strengthened;

- educational and training institutions are working more co-operatively with industry to develop and deliver CS-related activities and information that will lead to long-term opportunities and employment;

- organizations, particularly community-based ones, have undergone budget reductions and, as a result, are working together and managing their mandates through partnering;

- the CS program is expected to reduce duplication by ensuring that the appropriate partners are collaborating, rather than attempting to work separately, in an effort to meet labour market needs and develop appropriate delivery mechanisms;

- some of the partnerships are bringing together diverse organizations. The variety of stakeholders' perceptions has been useful in enhancing the CS pilots; and

- partnerships with organizations representing equity groups are expected to result in CS programs that meet the needs of these target groups more effectively.

The partnerships are expected to provide higher quality and cost-effective CS information and delivery systems. Strong networks established in the community at the grass-roots level are expected to provide ongoing benefits.

Some of the challenges related to partnerships include the following:

- significant time being required to establish partnerships and to develop relationships; and

- compromises being required when partners have different priorities, styles, and approaches.

As partnerships evolve there is a learning curve associated with their development regarding the organizational and communication channels of each partner. This learning curve lengthens the time it takes for all partners to become comfortable with each other, one of the greatest challenges of new partnerships. This has been especially evident in the Northern Project where 11 partners form the Board of Directors. The members of the KCDC Board have responsibilities to their respective organizations that require them to report on KCDC activities and to ratify Board decisions. This process was quite time consuming in the beginning and took time to streamline.

Partners must establish effective communication systems if they are to work together to reach common objectives. The partnerships formed as part of the Northern Project are innovative in that they involve effective collaboration among Métis Nation and First Nations organizations. In the past, joint planning by Métis Nation and First Nations organizations has been irregular, even though these two groups share many similar barriers and obstacles in the areas of career development and employment opportunities.

The sustainability of specific partnerships has not been determined at this stage. Sustainability will depend on a number of factors, including:

- whether the partnerships resulted in improved information and delivery systems to better meet client needs;
- motivation for partnering;
- benefits and value received by the partners;
- commitment of human and financial resources by partners; and
- how the best practices from the pilot projects will be applied in new program development.

2. How is the CS program contributing to increased federal and provincial co-ordination and collaboration in labour force development? How does this represent an improvement over previous collaboration?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Joint planning and designing of operating procedures and programs is beneficial and is key to collaboration.**
- **Saskatchewan training needs will be enhanced through the collective knowledge and expertise in labour market development and career services delivery contributed by staff of both orders of government.**
- **It is important to find a way to harmonise the individual and distinct federal and provincial infrastructures and systems of operation while still maintaining the integrity of the independent systems, if effective collaboration and co-ordination are to be achieved.**

Enhanced co-ordination of CS delivery has evolved because of the involvement of both the federal and provincial governments. Both orders of government have successfully worked together previously at the operational level to increase co-ordination and reduce duplication. The relationship between governments has been strengthened through Strategic Initiatives, as both orders of government work as equal partners towards shared interests and common principles, both in the development of policy and in management areas. The federal government is providing funding to the provincial government to implement initiatives identified through joint planning and program design to meet common objectives. The CS program has provided opportunities for both orders of government to talk with community leaders about the need to find new ways of delivering appropriate CS information with reduced government funding.

It is anticipated that the CS SI pilot projects will identify innovative service delivery models to fill career services gaps that could be used to develop and springboard new delivery approaches in the future. The province will build on the successes of the Strategic Initiatives Program as it looks to expand CS and move towards enhanced services within the scope of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy. The potential transfer of increased responsibility for training and employment services from the federal to the provincial government will benefit from the lessons learned through the CS SI projects.

In addition, further benefits of the co-ordinated bilateral approach undertaken by both orders of government on Labour Market Information and CS activities are expected to result in:

- increased effectiveness in resolving common issues and areas of concern;
- increased co-ordination of federal and provincial government departments and agencies;
- development of practical ways to better use scarce resources;
- reduced duplication of service; and
- reduced number of places clients have to visit to meet their career planning requirements.

The CS projects are creating better mechanisms for working together. In the past, the perception was that, in most instances, the federal and provincial government agencies responsible for labour force development were working in isolation and independently. The opportunities for overlap and duplication of information and services provided appeared to be more commonplace. Good communication, focusing on common goals, and the ability to work towards consensus has enhanced the working relationships between federal and provincial government employees. Key informant interviews, noted the federal and provincial co-chairs,

worked well together and showed excellent leadership in federal/provincial co-ordination, as well as in facilitating the CS Working Group.

3. What successes in innovations have been experienced? What challenges have been experienced and how have the challenges been handled?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Establishment of a technological infrastructure and support system capable of delivering proposed products and services within a multiple partner structure requires time and advanced planning, which sometimes results in delay.**
- **In the future, when considering multi-year projects and programs, governments should consider:**
  - **multi-year funding appropriations consistent with the multi-year operations of project or program;**
  - **ensure that sufficient funds and human resources are available for multiple-partner, community-based initiatives; and**
  - **ensure that fiscal year allocations for projects and programs are not lost if they are not completely expended in that fiscal year.**

The CS innovations and challenges have come primarily from the areas of partnerships (detailed in the previous section) and the use of multi-media and other technologies.

The innovations in terms of multi-media include the establishment of leading-edge technology in rural and northern Saskatchewan. Further development and enhancement of technical expertise available and resident in rural and northern Saskatchewan have also resulted from the pilot projects.

The challenges observed in the area of multi-media include addressing the technophobia of some rural, northern, and urban residents. In addition, the technical expertise required is not always available. These challenges have been overcome by making the technology more accessible to the residents of rural Saskatchewan in the Rural Project and by offering training courses for outreach workers in the Northern Project.

Another challenge is the capacity of the CS pilots to move to development of career services products. The time limitations of the funding, the decision to split CS and Labour Market Information into two streams, and the time required to develop and

maintain partnerships have all contributed to a compression of the product development phase of the Strategic Initiatives.

4. How satisfied are participants with various aspects of the project (e.g., application and approval, services provided, etc.)?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **Ensure appropriate timelines and adequate resources are available for program planning and design, technological infrastructure and product development, and service delivery when using a community-based partnership model so that clients receive appropriate information and support in a timely manner.**

In-depth interviews with the CS project manager and the co-ordinators of the pilots identified concerns about planning and implementation of the CS program. These centred on two areas:

(i) **Community-based planning and decision making** — The CS pilots were designed to operate using a community partnership model. The time and flexibility in responsibility for decision making which are required for this to be effective proved very difficult in light of administrative requirements of two orders of government. As well, each order of government was, at times, uncertain of the requirements of the other, which led to further delays and confusion at the local level. Areas such as communications and official languages requirements were cited as specific examples.

(ii) **Technological infrastructure and support** — Delays in establishing the Strategic Initiatives Database/Tracking System led to additional work for partners implementing the projects. As well, lack of adequate planning, which included provision for anticipated delays in development of technological infrastructure and support, led to a situation where timelines for the CS pilots to accomplish their ambitious agenda were shortened.

In-depth interviews with project partners have indicated a general satisfaction with the operation and implementation of the pilot projects. Development of tangible products has been slow, but the anticipated increased service that will be provided to clients and target market groups is a major plus of the projects. As the summative evaluation proceeds, the satisfaction of partners, sponsors, and client/target market groups will be further explored.

2.4 PROJECT COST EFFECTIVENESS

1. How were the funding allocations determined? Are the allocations appropriate relative to the identified needs?

KEY LEARNINGS

- **The decision, taken at the outset of the Strategic Initiatives projects, to limit allocations for administrative resources in favour of maximising those available for programming has had a negative impact on the effectiveness of project implementation.**
- **An appropriate level of human and financial resources for administration is required to increase timeliness and effectiveness and to ensure that client expectations for high-quality service can be achieved.**
- **New programs require administrative resources for the development of policies, procedures, processes, and systems. Continued internal monitoring and flexibility in allocating administrative resources according to requirements are needed.**

The overall budget for the CS stream of the Strategic Initiatives Program was $3,000,000, with each of the three pilot projects receiving $1,000,000 over the duration of its existence (January 1996 to June 1998). Each project was responsible to determine funding allocations for the pre-operational (planning and design) and operational (implementation) phases. Key informant interviews and workshops indicated that the initial allocations were appropriate but that differences within regions, as well as geographic distances, should also be considered when allocating funds. A strength of the CS SI project has been that resources and funds were dedicated to ensure that the needs assessment process could be completed by each of the projects at the community level. Flexibility was allowed and projects could carry forward surplus from the pre-operational phase to the operating phase or allocate from the operating phase to cover a pre-operational phase shortfall.

In designing the CS program, a conscious decision was made at the outset of the Strategic Initiatives projects to limit administration expenses in order to maximise the amount of funding provided for actual program delivery. The level of time and human resources required to develop and implement the program was not fully appreciated in the initial stages. As a result, several issues resulting from administrative resource constraints have had to be overcome.

Travel and accommodation costs incurred by the Working Group members, who contributed their time to the CS program stream, were absorbed by the partner organizations. Existing staff balanced their CS duties with other, ongoing

responsibilities. As a result, priorities had to be set and trade-off decisions had to be made when dealing with administrative issues. Costs for administration and start-up, including equipment, human resources, and office costs, have been higher than what was initially budgeted. The administration of the SI Program is multi-faceted, and having the separate streams (CS, LMI, and Work/Study) has increased administrative needs because each stream has different administrative requirements. This has contributed to higher than anticipated administrative requirements.

Regina Project

Relative to the other two CS projects, the Regina project has benefited from lower travel and communication costs associated with development and implementation because of the centralised location of partners. The Regina project also benefited from access to administrative support during the pre-operational phase, and, as a result, the project manager was able to focus on other areas, such as creating effective communication linkages with stakeholders, employers, and others.

During the pre-operational phase, extensive primary research involving public consultation was contracted as part of the needs assessment. In some cases, the research confirmed what the stakeholders already believed. In-depth interviews indicated that less rigorous research may have provided similar information and resulted in more resources being available for the operational phase.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were identified as priorities for the CS Strategic Initiative stream.

1. Identify good practices arising from pilot projects that may be applicable to an integrated career and employment services system in the province.

2. Continue to monitor requirements for administrative resources and allocate funding as required for efficient and effective service.

3. Ensure the Strategic Initiatives Database/Tracking System is functioning properly and meeting its mandate to provide activity reports for timely decision making. Provide appropriate staff training to increase and ensure the effectiveness of the Database/Tracking System.

3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS: FUTURE CAREER SERVICES PROGRAMS

1. Incorporate a pre-operational (planning and design) phase with timelines and appropriate allocation of resources (including human resources) in complex programs like CS for the following activities:

    - partnership development;
    - focus groups with stakeholders to provide input in program design;
    - development of common visions and objectives;
    - development of detailed but flexible policies, procedures, processes, and job descriptions;
    - identification and implementation of tracking system and monitoring requirements;
    - development of an appropriate communication strategy; and
    - development and implementation of an appropriate training program for staff.

2. Provide additional planning time and capacity when using community-based partnership operating models for program development and delivery.

3. Use program criteria that are transparent and establish a framework within which applicants can determine useful as well as definable outcomes.

4. Develop clear and concise written material outlining the program vision, objectives, criteria, roles, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and expected timelines.

5. Allocate appropriate timeframes and resources, since significant time and resources (human and financial) are required to establish true partnerships and to develop relationships at the community level and among federal/provincial government departments and agencies, industry, and community-based organizations.

6. Ensure grass-roots involvement and community-based support from a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process.

7. Encourage local management of the pilot projects to address issues of concern based on the needs of clients in each geographical area and to encourage local participation of community, business, and client/target market organizations.

8. Ensure technology is user-friendly, accessible, well understood, and adequately supported.

9. Expectations related to government communications policies and requirements and their systems of operation must be established with community partners and project staff at the beginning of any program like CS Strategic Initiative.

10. Provide presentations and written material regarding new programs to staff at the community service level, even if they are not directly involved in administering programs.

11. Involve funding and training partners in the developmental stage of individual projects to improve co-ordination of activities.

12. Allocate appropriate administrative resources to meet client expectations for timely and high-quality information. Timelines for joint federal and provincial programs must incorporate the time required for approval by both orders of government.

APPENDIX ONE: CAREER SERVICES EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Career Services Evaluation Questions

Relevance	Indicators	Methodologies
1. What was the process used to determine the social and economic need for the CS program and individual projects?	Process used	Key informant interviews Document Review - Project proposals - Needs assessments
2. How have the labour force development needs of target groups been incorporated in the design of the CS Program?	Participation of target groups in program design Design of CS projects Opinions of target groups	Key informant interviews Document Review - Project descriptions - Needs assessments
3. What types of innovations are the CS projects expected to test?	Innovations incorporated in CS projects	Key informant interviews Document Review - Project proposals - Project descriptions
4. How does the CS program represent improvements in service to clients over alternative programs?	Opinions of counsellors Opinions of clients Opinions of employers Opinions of other stakeholders	Key informant interviews Counsellor focus groups Employer focus groups Job seeker focus groups On-line user surveys

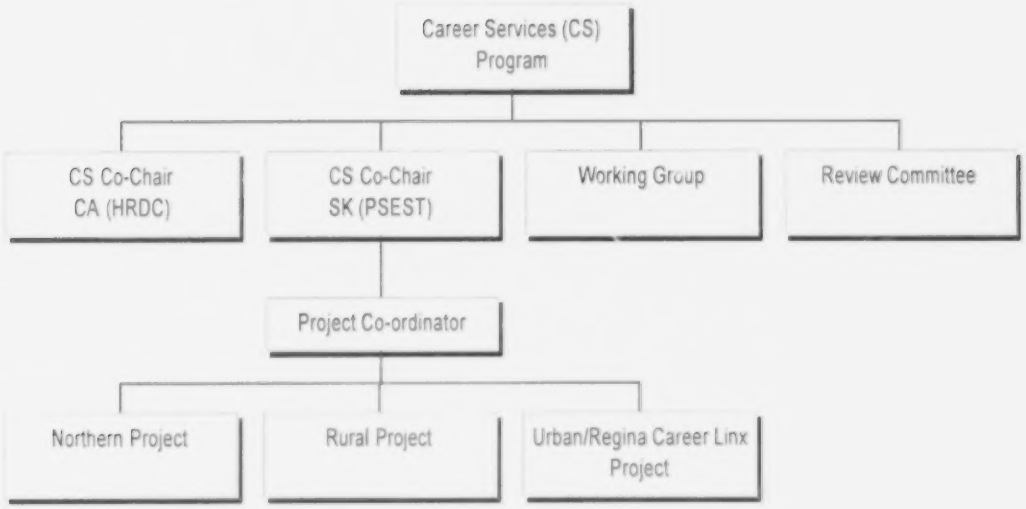
Program Design and Delivery	Indicators	Methodologies
1. Have any operational/ legislative/regulatory/ jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of the program to achieve its objectives? How were these handled?	Stakeholder opinions	Key informant interviews Working Group Workshop Co-Chair Workshop
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the CS program's organizational structure?	Administrative policies and procedures Reporting Structures Committees Roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders Internal communication	Key informant interviews Document Review Workplans Working Group Workshop Co-Chair Workshop
3. How was the community informed about the CS program? Was the external communication effective?	External communication Opinions of stakeholders	Key informant interviews Document Review Communication Strategy Counsellor focus groups Employer focus groups Job-seeker focus groups
4. What measures are being taken for tracking, monitoring, and assessing the projects? Are these adequate?	Tracking and monitoring procedures in place Opinions of stakeholders	Key informant interviews Tracking System review

Program Success	Indicators	Methodologies
1. What types of partnerships have been developed through the CS program?	Successes, partnerships experienced Challenges, partnerships experienced How the challenges were handled	Key informant interviews Working Group Workshop Co-Chair Workshop
2. How is the CS program contributing to increased federal and provincial co-ordination and collaboration in labour force development? How does this represent an improvement over previous collaboration?	Changes in working environment How the program is contributing to a reduction in duplication	Key informant interviews Working Group Workshop Co-Chair Workshop
3. What successes in innovations have been experienced? What challenges have been experienced and how have the challenges been handled?	Opinions of stakeholders	Key informant interviews
4. How satisfied are stakeholders with the CS program?	Opinions of stakeholders regarding: - Services provided - Overall program	Key informant interviews Counsellor focus groups Employer focus groups Job-seeker focus groups On-line surveys
5. Have the intended impacts of the CS program been achieved?	Impacts on counsellors Impacts on employers Impacts on job seekers	Key informant interviews Counsellor focus groups Employer focus groups Job-seeker focus groups On-line surveys
6. What are the unintended impacts of the CS program?	Impacts on counsellors Impacts on employers Impacts on job seekers	Key informant interviews Counsellor focus groups Employer focus groups Job-seeker focus groups On-line surveys

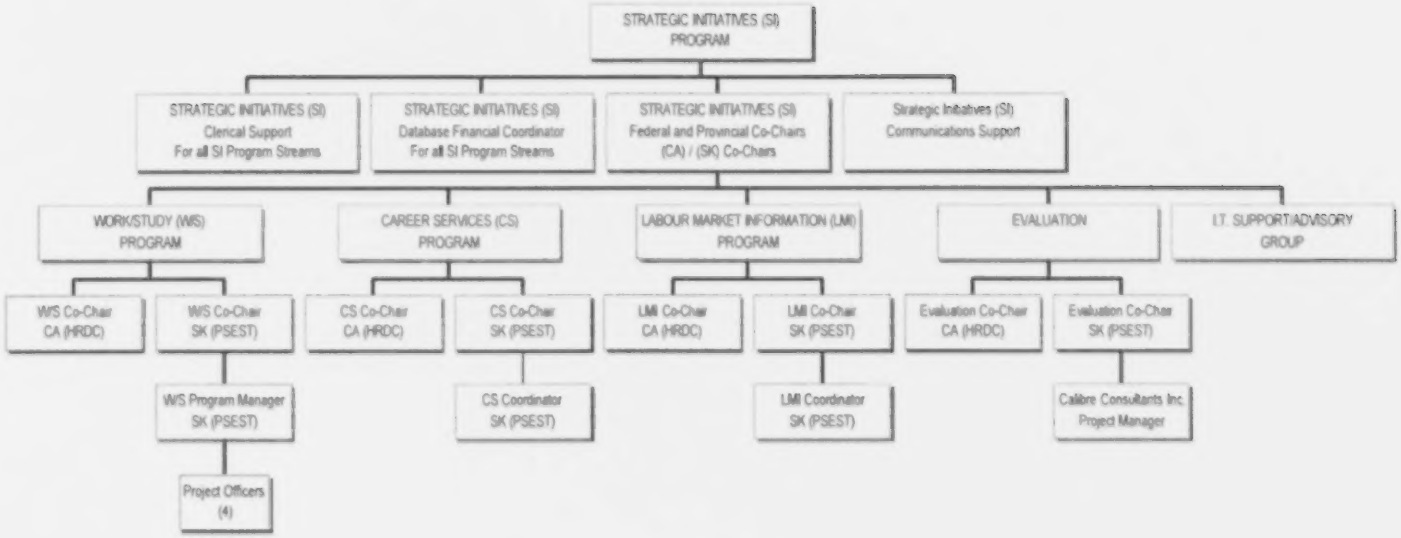
Program Cost Effectiveness	Indicators	Methodologies
1. How were the funding allocations determined? Are the allocations appropriate relative to the identified needs?	Process used Opinions of stakeholders	Key informant interviews
2. Is the CS program model a cost-effective way of achieving program objectives?	Opinions of stakeholders Cost comparison with other programs	Key informant interviews Review and analysis of costs

APPENDIX TWO: CAREER SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

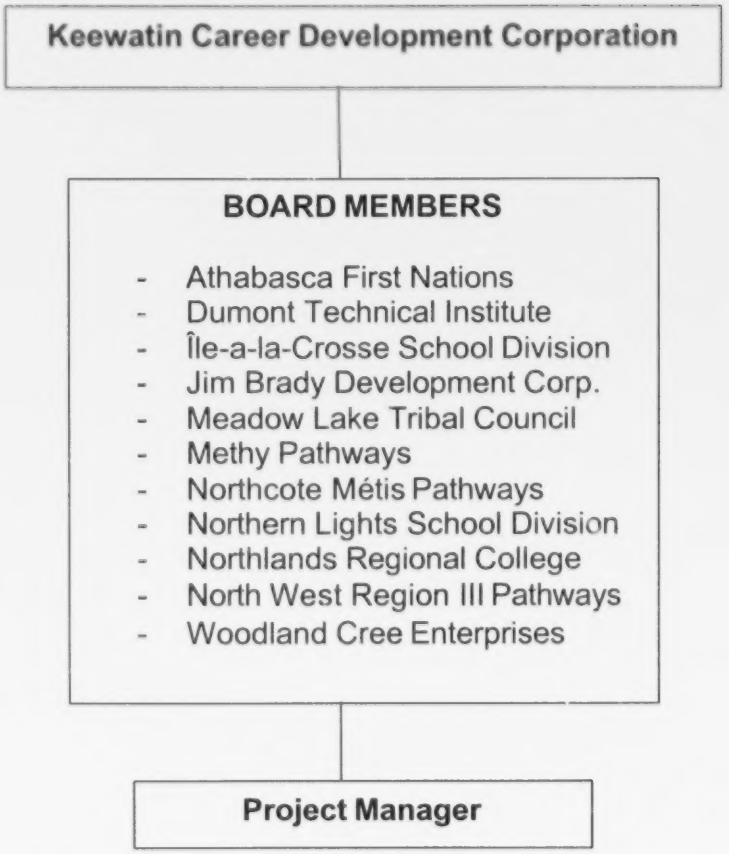
CAREER SERVICES (CS) PROGRAM
Organisational Chart



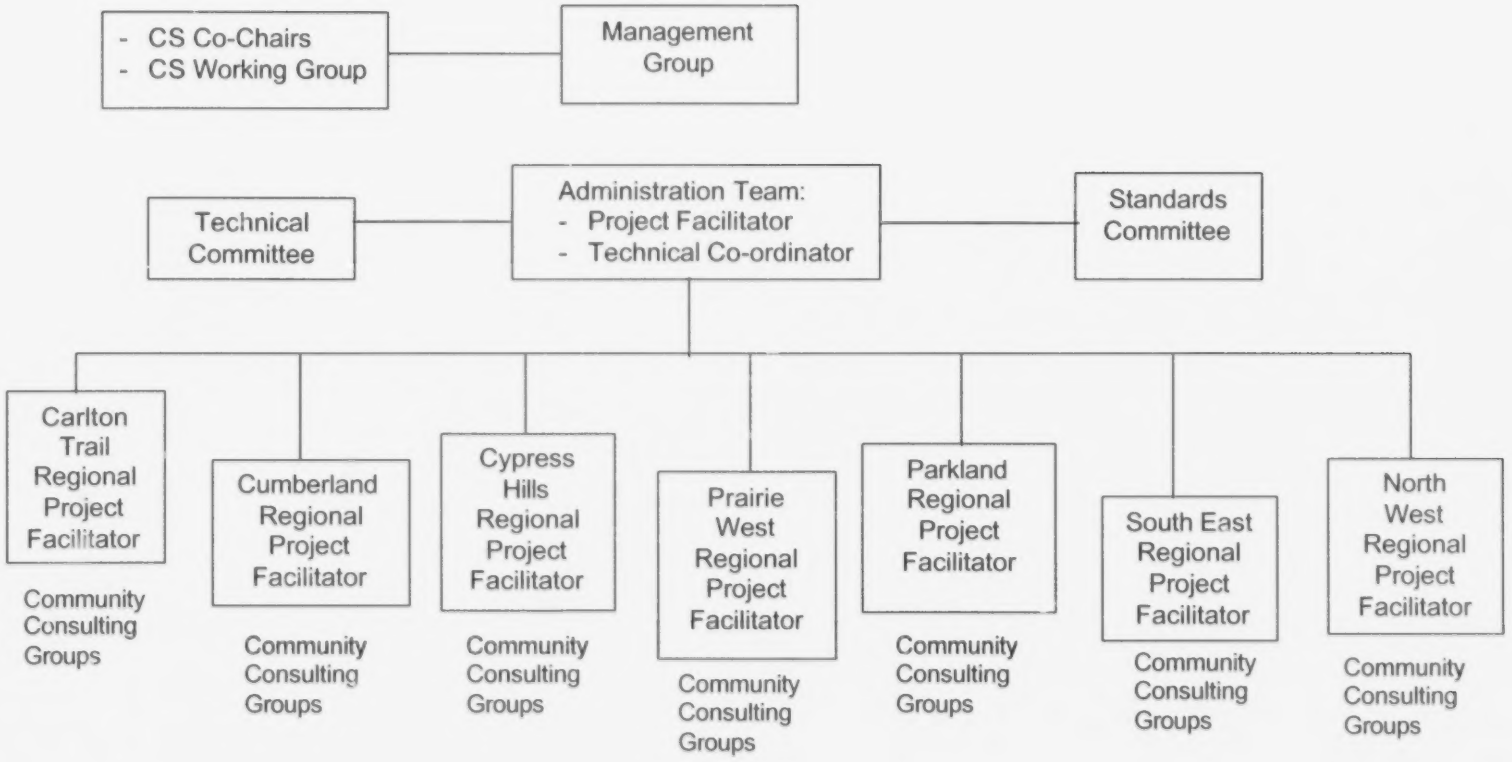
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (SI) PROGRAM
Organisational Chart


STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (SI) PROGRAM
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (SI) Clerical Support For all SI Program Streams
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (SI) Database Financial Coordinator For all SI Program Streams
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (SI) Federal and Provincial Co-Chairs (CA) / (SK) Co-Chairs
Strategic Initiatives (SI) Communications Support
WORK/STUDY (WS) PROGRAM
CAREER SERVICES (CS) PROGRAM
LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI) PROGRAM
EVALUATION
I.T. SUPPORT/ADVISORY GROUP
W/S Co-Chair CA (HRDC)
W/S Co-Chair SK (PSEST)
CS Co-Chair CA (HRDC)
CS Co-Chair SK (PSEST)
LMI Co-Chair CA (HRDC)
LMI Co-Chair SK (PSEST)
Evaluation Co-Chair CA (HRDC)
Evaluation Co-Chair SK (PSEST)
W/S Program Manager SK (PSEST)
CS Coordinator SK (PSEST)
LMI Coordinator SK (PSEST)
Calibre Consultants Inc. Project Manager
Project Officers (4)

CS NORTHERN PROJECT
Organizational Chart


Keewatin Career Development Corporation
BOARD MEMBERS
- Athabasca First Nations
- Dumont Technical Institute
- Île-a-la-Crosse School Division
- Jim Brady Development Corp.
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council
- Methy Pathways
- Northcote Métis Pathways
- Northern Lights School Division
- Northlands Regional College
- North West Region III Pathways
- Woodland Cree Enterprises
Project Manager

CS RURAL PROJECT
Organizational Chart



CS REGINA CAREER LINX PROJECT
Organizational Chart